

some among another group of substances — the volatile aromatic or “essential” oils — effectively keep out marauders without harming us? These, or certain of them, possess undoubted insectifugal properties, notably the stronger-smelling ones such as citronella and verbena oils, and possibly orange oil (hateful to flies, I have read — but what of other insects?). Many occur naturally in herbs, fruits etc, while some are used in confectionery; and so, besides being pleasant to the human nose, should have at most very low toxicity. One or another of this class, or a mixture, might serve our purpose. A few drops soaked into a bit of a sponge or the like should suffice for as long as a pronounced perfume remains. I have found that a tablet of strongly-scented soap, shut up in a storebox for some months, seems to thoroughly impregnate and proof it against pests for very many years; though small pieces, or chips off a tablet, are ineffective. Camphor (non-toxic, much used formerly) has to be replaced so often as to be hardly practical.

Of course, any candidate oil or oil-mixture would have to meet certain conditions: it must be readily obtainable and not too expensive; the vapour must not exert any untoward effect on the specimens, such as to relax or discolour them; nor on card-mounts or paper lining drawers and boxes; nor favour the growth of moulds. Experiment would appear to be in order.

I wonder whether some reader of the *Record*, whose work, perhaps, enables him to speak from a basis of knowledge (rather than mere speculation which is all I can offer), might be willing to tackle the problem? Any sound advice here would be extremely helpful, and I am sure that the entomological fraternity would feel profoundly indebted to him.— A.A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.

Winter record of Hummingbird Hawkmoth in Kent.

On 23rd February 1990 we found a Hummingbird Hawkmoth, *Macroglossum stellatarum*, feeding on the flowers in Winter Jasmine, *Jasminum nudiflorum*, in our garden at New Barn, Kent (TQ66E7). The moth was seen clearly for approximately one minute at 5pm, in bright sunshine and at close range, and again at 5.10 pm in our garage (sunset London 5.30 pm). It then flew into the next garden and was lost from sight. It seemed unconcerned with our close presence.

Although the Hummingbird Hawkmoth normally is recorded as a migrant to Britain in July and August, we understand there was a small immigration of several species early in 1990. It may be, however, that the mild weather had allowed it to overwinter successfully.

On 23rd February, high temperatures were recorded in Britain (18°C in London) and it was 13°C in our garden at 5.05 pm. The temperature range of the previous four days (London) was: 6 am - 6 pm, 12 - 16°C, 6 pm - 6 am, 7 - 10°C (*The Times*).— PETER & PAULINE HEATHCOTE, 9 Greenfinches, New Barn, Longfield, Kent DA3 7ND.